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## SUCCESS STORY

# Community Improves Land Tenure

**USAID empowers community to improve land tenure**



Photo: EMG/USAID LTERA

*Mrs. Semeen, a longtime resident of District # 7 in Kabul City sits on the community council and is the Director of the Women's Center: "Because of this USAID program, people are hopeful and satisfied that this community will become a formal part of the city."*

**USAID's land titling program has enabled informal settlement communities to secure their land tenure, identify land needs, create plans that meet those needs, and encourage economic investment.**

Mrs. Semeen has lived in District # 7 of Kabul City all her life. She recalls the disputes neighbors had over land issues and tells the story of one neighbor killing another over a boundary wall. In addition to land disputes, she and her neighbors also lack basic services such as water, power and garbage pickup, and risk eviction or demolition of their property at any time because they do not fall within the city's urban plan.

Today, land disputes in her neighborhood are a thing of the past and residents are hopeful that their community will become a part of the city as a result of USAID's Land Titling and Economic Restructuring of Afghanistan project (LTERA) implemented by Emerging Markets Group. This project relied on Mrs. Semeen, her colleagues on the neighborhood's community council and community members to assist in mapping, property survey and adjudication.

Aerial photographs of the neighborhood were taken from a helicopter. Using computerized printed maps, a community survey team went door to door to mark the boundaries and number each plot of land in the neighborhood. Various forms of ownership were documented and data collected for each property. The boundary demarcation was completed and linked to the property maps and ownership documentation in a database. A summary report of ownership was then provided to the community council and residents.

The mapping and boundary demarcation also enabled the community to develop a neighborhood land use plan for a clinic, school, and recreational areas. Based upon USAID/LTERA's process in the community, the District Municipal Office has conditionally agreed to formalize the neighborhood into its urban planning with the approval of the city. Community residents are less fearful of demolition or eviction and agree on their property boundaries. USAID's support has not only improved the perception of tenure security for residents but has also strengthened the community's skills in understanding and resolving property issues, and community land use planning.